

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR



SENATE TAXATION  
EXHIBIT NO. 8  
DATE 3-20-07  
JULIA ROSS SB-553  
LT. GOVERNOR

To: Senate Taxation Committee  
Fr: Emily Lipp Sirota, Economic Development Specialist  
Governor's Office of Economic Development  
Date: March 20, 2007  
RE: SB553

---

On behalf of the Governor's Office, I offer support for the concepts outlined in SB553, a bill to revise Montana's physician recruitment program for rural and medically underserved areas. We appreciate the work of Senator Black, the university system, and those involved with the subject of Montana's health care workforce who worked together to develop this legislation. The Governor's Office supports the goals of this legislation for the following reasons:

- This legislation provides for a strategic use and repackaging of limited resources to address physician recruitment challenges in rural and medically underserved areas.
- The loan repayment program provides a 100% return on investment because every dollar that is paid out goes to a physician providing services in Montana's areas of need.
- Montanans who participate in Montana's medical education program, WWAMI, will be granted preference; native Montanans are the most likely to remain in Montana communities beyond the 5 years they serve and receive loan repayments.
- The proposed changes would put Montana on par with our surrounding states with these physician recruitment strategies.

I ask that the committee do pass SB553, a strategic tool for the health care delivery system in Montana to help recruit and retain physicians.